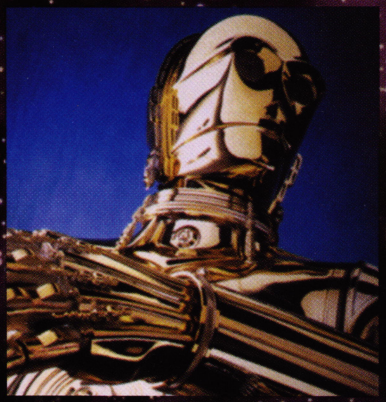
STAR WARS

THE MAGIC OF MYTH

August 5, 2001–January 5, 2002



The Journey Continues with...

The Heroic Tradition

Art and the Mythic Journey

An exploration of the Toledo Museum of Art galleries

The Heroic Tradition

In every country and in every time, people have told stories about heroes and their adventures. No matter where they are told or whom they are about, these stories—called myths—usually share certain themes and characters. Such themes and characters show what people all over the world consider important about being human.

Stories about heroes have always been popular subjects for art. It's not surprising, then, that much of what is in the Toledo Museum of Art shows epic heroes and heroines and the trials they endured. Come with us through the Museum's galleries and learn the timeless appeal of these legendary tales.

Anakin Skywalker, Podrace Costume, Photograph by Gary Mortensen for the exhibiton *Star Wars: The Magic of Myth*.
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The Hero's Journey

From Hercules to Luke Skywalker, from King Arthur to Harry Potter, every mythic hero follows a similar pattern. Even before his real adventures begin, the hero is usually identified as exceptional. His birth is foretold in legends. As a child the hero is often raised by foster parents—his true parents might be royalty or even gods. After the child survives several attempts on his life, he sets off to find his rightful place in the world.

The hero begins his journey—called a mythic quest—with a call to adventure. He makes a few trusted friends that join in his adventures. The hero must battle evil in a variety of disguises, rescue a princess, and face his own inner demons. After he triumphs, the hero returns home. Along the way, the hero gains a wise teacher, a protective talisman, and a greater understanding of justice.

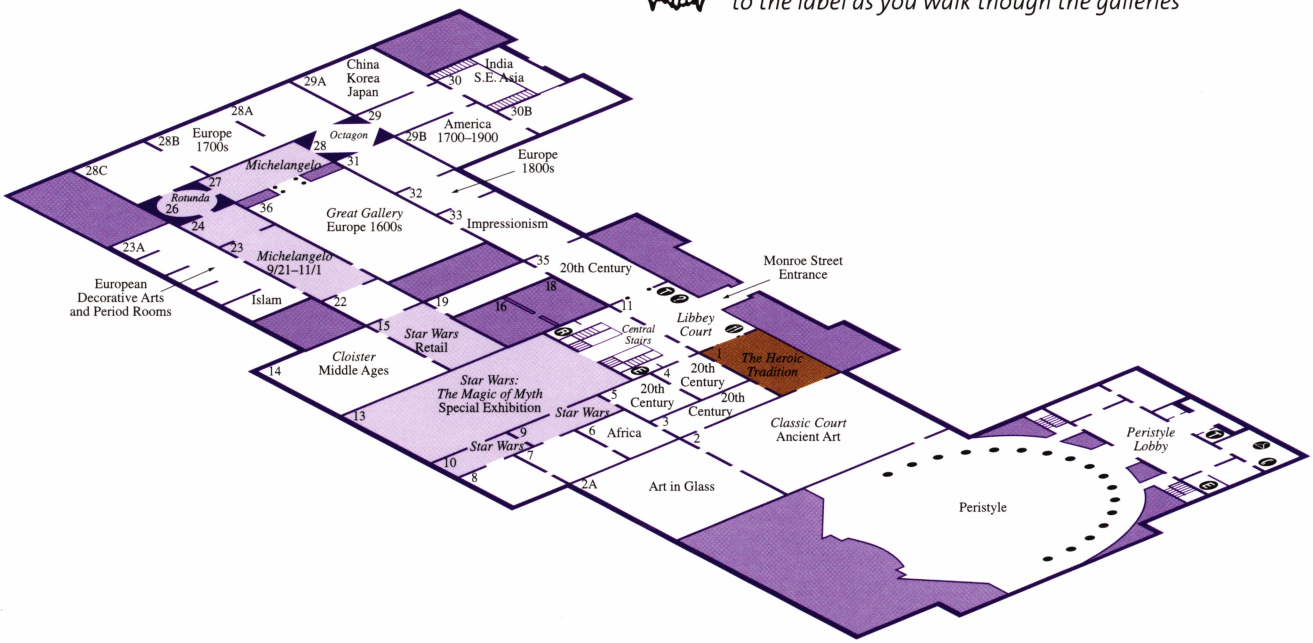
The hero's victory usually frees his people from literal or symbolic slavery. After he returns home, he marries the princess and becomes the leader. At the end of his life the hero often dies mysteriously or is betrayed by someone he trusts. Yet even after his death, legends persist that the hero will return when his people need him most.

The journey begins in Gallery 1 with the exhibition:

The Heroic Tradition

Art and the Mythic Journey

To find each work of art, look for this symbol next to the label as you walk though the galleries



Gallery 1

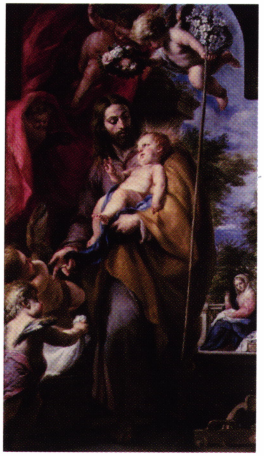
Jacques-Louis David
French, 1748–1825
The Oath of the Horatii
Oil on canvas, 1786
Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1950.308

In many myths the hero must risk his life for the good of his society. To prove that he is worthy, the hero often swears that he is willing to lay down his life while defending others. The story of this painting is set during the war between Rome and its neighboring city Alba Longa. It depicts the three Roman Horatii brothers swearing an oath to their father that they will fight to the death against three Alban brothers. Only the youngest Horatii brother survived the battle to declare Rome the victor.

Gallery 1

Arthur Hughes
British, 1832–1915
Ophelia
Oil on canvas, about 1865
Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1952.87

In most traditional stories about heroes, women have one of two roles: they are either damsels in distress or are tragically lost when the hero fails to understand his quest or the princess's role in it. Ophelia is a typical tragic heroine. She is a victim of Hamlet's manic behavior—she is driven insane and drowns herself. Women in heroic myths usually meet such a fate unless the hero can find a way to save them. Princess Leia represents a more progressive image of women in heroic adventure. Though Leia is initially saved by Luke Skywalker and Han Solo, she is strong and self-reliant. She is a resourceful military leader and saves Luke and Han several times in the *Star Wars* trilogy.



Gallery 1

Claudio Coello
Spanish, 1642–1693
St. Joseph and the Christ Child
Oil on canvas, about 1666
Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment,
Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1981.44

So important is the hero's arrival in the world that even the heavens will celebrate his birth and watch over him until he reaches maturity. From a very young age heroes are recognized as exceptional people. Their arrival is usually foretold in legends and even as an infant a hero will demonstrate his divine potential. During childhood he learns the moral lessons and develops the skills needed to fulfill his destiny. Many times the young hero attracts faithful followers who will later help in his quest. In *Star Wars* it is the young Luke Skywalker who is destined to bring balance to The Force.

Gallery 1

Benjamin West
American, 1738–1820
Scene from Ariosto's Orlando Furioso—
The Damsel and Orlando
Oil on canvas, 1793
Gift of Florence Scott Libbey, 1912.10

Tales of heroes rescuing fair princesses and damsels in distress are among the most popular of traditional myths. Almost every adventure involves a romance that shows the hero's softer side and his personal growth. This painting is based on a popular romance written in the 16th century. The story deals with the love of the knight Orlando for Angelica, the daughter of the king of Cathay. The painting illustrates the chivalric nature of the hero's romantic exploits. The true knight must always defend the life and virtue of the damsel. In the *Star Wars* films Luke Skywalker and Han Solo show their true heroism by fighting for and with Princess Leia. They prove their worth by rescuing her, slaying enemies for her and—in the end—by fighting as rebels against the Federation and the Evil Empire.

Gallery 1

American, 1829–1904
The Council of War
Painted plaster, after 1868
Gift of Mrs. William H. Hill, 1953.163

People use myths to help them understand the world. One way we do this is by raising real-life people to the status of heroes. Great leaders, like Abraham Lincoln, are changed into heroes by retelling their life stories using the elements of myth. Stories about Lincoln all stress his humble origins, his personal accomplishments, his stunning victories, and especially his tragic death. Such stories all fit the pattern of heroic myth.

Gallery 1

Stefano Maderno
Italian (Rome), 1576–1636
Hercules and Antaeus
Bronze, about 1622
Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1952.14

Many of the hero's adventures require exceptional physical skill and strength. To defeat his most powerful enemies, however, he must also learn patience, faith and wisdom. This statue shows Hercules wrestling with the giant Antaeus. The son of Neptune and Earth, Antaeus could not be defeated because he renewed his strength every time he touched the ground. Hercules is only able to vanquish Antaeus by holding him off the ground and strangling him. In a similar way, Luke Skywalker learned to defeat the stronger forces of the Empire by putting his faith in The Force.

Gallery 1

Follower of Giovanni da Bologna
Italian (Florence), 1529–1608
Samson and the Philistine
Bronze, about 1600–1625
Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment,
Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1951.383

Samson, the biblical strongman, was a symbol of hope and redemption for his people. He struggled throughout his life against their oppressors: the Philistines. In spite of many setbacks, Luke Skywalker and his friends carried on a long struggle against the seemingly unbeatable Empire. In a similar way, Samson never gave up his fight against the Philistines. After Delilah robbed Samson of his strength by cutting his hair, he was captured and blinded by the Philistines. Yet, even after this betrayal, Samson renewed his devotion in time to regain his strength for one last heroic feat. He pulled down the pillars supporting the temple of his oppressors, killing thousands in one blow.

Gallery 1

Central Tibet
Buddha
Gilded bronze with turquoise, lapis lazuli,
and powdered azurite, about 1450
Gift of The Apollo Society, 1989.4

Every hero myth is really a story of personal development. Each hero searches for a sacred object, a special knowledge, or a sense of enlightenment that will help bring peace to his world. The story of Luke Skywalker follows the same pattern. Over the course of the *Star Wars* films we see Luke develop from an impatient teenager to a Jedi Knight. By the end of the *Star Wars* trilogy he is able to use The Force to save the galaxy from the evil Empire. In the same way, the great figures of every major religion have gone on a "vision quest." Moses' traveled to Mount Sinai and John the Baptist spent time in the desert. Mohammed meditated in the mountain cave and the Buddha searched for enlightenment. Their stories show these leaders' search for meaning and knowledge.

The journey continues with a hero hunt through the Museum galleries...

To find each work of art, look for this symbol next to the label as you walk though the galleries.

Classic Court

Etruscan
Statuette of Hercle
Bronze, early 4th century B.C.
Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1978.22

Whether he is known as Herakles (his Greek name), Hercules (his Roman name), or Hercle (his Etruscan name), this is the most famous of all ancient heroes. The son of a god and a princess, Hercules was raised by mortal parents and as a child survived several attempts on his life. One story tells of the infant Hercules strangling poisonous snakes that were sent to kill him by a jealous goddess, thus proving his virtue. Upon reaching maturity, Hercules performed numerous heroic tasks. After he died he was adopted as a deity by the gods of Mount Olympus.

Classic Court

The Antimenes Painter
Greek, made in the province of Attica
Hydria (water jar)
Wheel-thrown, slip-decorated earthenware with incised details, about 525 B.C.
Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1956.70

The best known of Hercules's heroic feats are his twelve labors. He undertook these tasks to purify himself after killing his own family during a fit of madness. The scene on the shoulder of this hydria depicts the first of these labors—the slaying of the Nemean lion. In a similar way, Luke Skywalker faces like trials, including the defeat of the monstrous Wampa ice creature at the beginning of *The Empire Strikes Back*. Hercules is often shown wearing the skin of the Nemean lion as a symbol of his strength and resourcefulness.

Classic Court

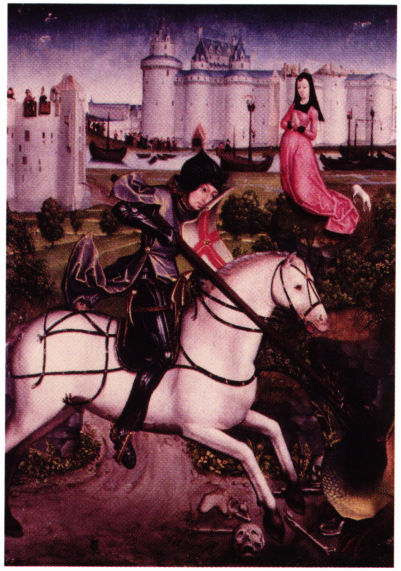
The Potter Tleson
Greek, made in the province of Attica
Kylix (drinking cup)
Wheel-thrown, slip-decorated earthenware
with incised details, about 550 B.C.
Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment,
Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1958.70

Theseus was one of the most important heroes in antiquity. According to some legends he was the son of Aegus, king of Athens. According to others he was the son of Neptune, god of the sea. Raised in secrecy, Theseus set out on a series of adventures when he became an adult. Perhaps his most famous adventure, the slaying of the Minotaur in its Labyrinth, is depicted in this drinking cup. Using a ball of twine given to him by princess Ariadne to mark his path, Theseus was able to navigate the Labyrinth and slay the Minotaur at its center. Luke Skywalker undertakes a similar task in *Star Wars* when the droids used earlier by Princess Leia help Luke find his way out of the Death Star maze after escaping from the compactor and its monsters.

Classic Court

The Rycroft Painter
Greek, made in the province of Attica
Amphora
Wheel-thrown, slip-decorated earthenware
with incised details, 520–510 B.C.
Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment,
Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1972.54

In many heroic myths the comrades of a fallen warrior must reclaim his body so he can be either resurrected or given a respectful burial. In this scene king Priam of Troy attempts to pay a ransom to the Greek warrior Achilles in order to retrieve the body of Hector, a Trojan hero. A similar scene takes place in *Return of the Jedi* when Luke Skywalker and his allies try to barter with Jabba the Hutt for Han Solo, who has been frozen in carbonite.



Gallery 19

Anonymous
French, 1480–1490
Saint George and the Dragon
Oil on panel
Museum Purchase, 1943.30

The slaying of a dragon is a fundamental step in a hero's quest. The dragon symbolizes the ultimate evil that the hero must overcome. In this painting, St. George battles Lucifer in dragon form. Here the dragon is literal. In other hero myths it may be symbolic. For example, the evil Death Star is a dragon symbol that Luke Skywalker destroys in *Star Wars*, removing the Empire's threat to the galaxy.

Gallery 28 (Octagon)

Jean Jouvenet
French, 1644–1717
The Deposition
Oil on canvas, 1709
Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1974.56

Often a hero's death is due to a betrayal by someone closest to him. In this painting, for example, we see the results of the betrayal of Jesus by his disciple Judas. And while a hero's death is tragic, as this painting shows, it is also his ultimate sacrifice for his people. But death is rarely final for a hero. Many times the hero's spirit returns to guide others along the proper path. In the original *Star Wars* trilogy Ben Kenobi was killed by Darth Vader in *Star Wars: A New Hope*. In spite of that, his spirit repeatedly returns to help Luke in his quest.

Gallery 30

Anonymous
India, Orissa
Narasimha
Sandstone, about 1250
Purchased with funds from the Libbey Endowment, Gift of Edward Drummond Libbey, 1987.176

In many cultures heroes take on different guises. Narasimha, half-lion, half-man, is the fourth manifestation of the Hindu god, Vishnu. Vishnu takes on different guises at various times in order to save the world from destruction. As Narasimha, he saves a loyal devotee from an evil king and fulfills his role as cosmic hero.

Gallery 28c

Pierre-Etienne Monnot
French, 1657–1737
Mercury and Argus
Marble, about 1720–1730
Mrs. C. Lockhart McKelvey Fund, 1992.26

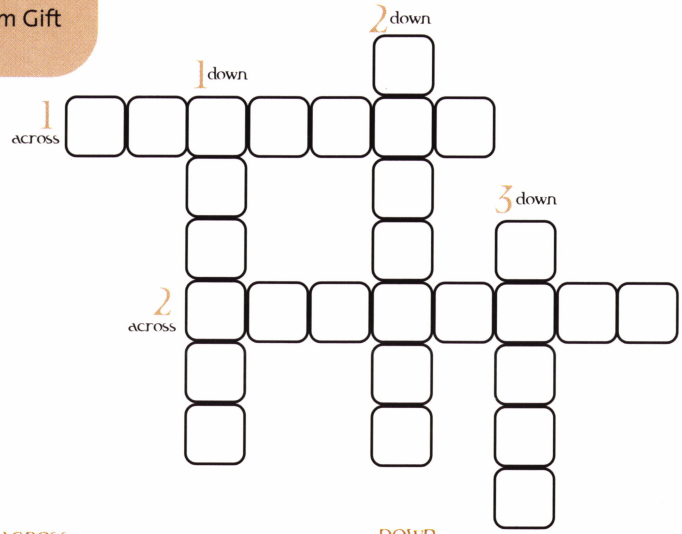
Myths sometimes try to explain natural phenomena. For example, Argus was a hero with numerous eyes all over his body (as many as 100 eyes according to some legends). The goddess Juno sent him to watch over Io, a young girl transformed into a heifer. Argus was punished after he failed in his task of protecting Io from Jupiter. This statue shows Mercury, the messenger of the gods, beheading Argus in order to return Io to human form. As a memorial to Argus, Juno decorated the tail of the beautiful peacock with his eyes.

Hunt for Heroes Contest

You could win a Star Wars Poster, Museum Gift Certificate, or Movie Passes

To Enter:

- Solve the puzzle and provide your name and contact information in the space provided.
- Drop your entry into the box located in the Libbey Court on the Museum's main floor.
- Prizes will be given away monthly from August through December, 2001.
- One winner will be chosen each month.
- Winners will be selected by random drawing from entries received each month.
- The puzzle must be complete and solved correctly in order to be eligible to win.
- Winners will be notified via mail and/or e-mail



ACROSS

1 Victim of Hamlet's manic behavior in Arthur Hughes' s painting

2 Theseus was best known for slaying this mythical creature (on the drinking cup by the Potter Tleson)

DOWN

1 Name of object hanging on the wall between King Priam of Troy and Achilles (on the amphora by the Rycroft Painter)

2 Name of seated historical figure in *The Council of War*

3 Weapon St. George is using to battle the dragon in *St. George and the Dragon*

Chewbacca, 1997, Photograph by Eric Long and Mark Avino for the exhibition *Star Wars: The Magic of Myth*. Star Wars™ and © 1997 by Lucasfilm Ltd. All rights reserved.

Contact Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Age: _____ Are you a member of the Toledo Museum of Art? ____ Yes ____ No

Programs

An exciting array of programs awaits you to complement the exhibition.

Sunday, August 5
The Art of Star Wars
Doug Chiang, Design Director of *Star Wars* prequel films
1 P.M., Little Theater

Book signing following the lecture
$5 Members, $6 Seniors/Students, $7 Nonmembers
Space limited

Sunday, September 9
Cosmic Concert and Light Show
3 P.M., Peristyle

Join the Toledo Symphony for an out-of-this-world concert with a musical repertoire from *Star Wars: A New Hope, The Empire Strikes Back,* and *Return of the Jedi.* This exciting family concert is sponsored by Art and the Workplace, a community outreach program sponsored by Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund Museum Collections Accessibility Initiative. Enjoy the exhibition before or after the concert. The Museum will be open until 6 P.M. this day.

Members: $7.50 Adults, $5 Children
Nonmembers: $10 Adults, $7.50 Children

Saturday, September 22
Star Wars, Visual Effects & Industrial Light & Magic
Paul Huston, Digital Artist, ILM
1 P.M., Little Theater

Friday, September 30
Hero Mythology in Art and Popular Culture
Jeffrey Brown, Professor of Popular Culture, Bowling Green State University
1 P.M., Little Theater

Dr. Brown presents an overview of heroic themes shared in both classic art and popular culture from Hercules to Harry Potter. Using the Museum's adjunct exhibition to *Star Wars: The Magic of Myth* as well as other examples, he will describe the enduring appeal of heroic legends.

Free lecture

Sunday, October 7
Star Wars and Its Impact on Popular Culture
Steve Sansweet, Author and director of content management and fan relations for Lucasfilm
1 P.M., Little Theater

Book signing following the lecture
$5 Members, $6 Seniors/Students, $7 Nonmembers
Space limited

Sunday, October 28
Halloween Fantasy
1–4 P.M.

Annual TMA Halloween family day. Come in your favorite hero costume. Enjoy hands-on activities and the exhibition *Star Wars: The Magic of Myth.*

Sunday, November 4
The Archaeology of Star Wars
David West Reynolds, Author and archaeologist, who rediscovered the site in Tunisia where the first *Star Wars* film was made.
1 P.M., Little Theater

Book signing following the lecture
$5 Members, $6 Seniors/Students, $7 Nonmembers
Space limited

Special speakers, programs, and workshops may be subject to change without notice.

Look for information about a film series, lectures, and other special programs on the Museum's website www.toledomuseum.org or call 419-255-8000 or 800-644-6862.

For ticket information, call 419-243-7000 or 888-763-7486.

Smithsonian Institution

Star Wars: The Magic of Myth was developed by the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum. The exhibition was organized for travel by the Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service. All of the artifacts in this exhibition are on loan from the archives of Lucasfilm, Ltd. ©Lucasfilm Ltd. & TM. All Rights Reserved. Used Under Authorization.

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